# Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Vol. 2 No. 10 • www.saipantribune.com | A PUBLICATION OF THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE | Saturday, March 10, 2007


## Mad for maillot!

**The love affair with the two-piece swimsuit is officially coming to an end. Nowadays, the maillot or one-piece bathing suit is finally sharing centerstage with skimpy bikinis as the choice of swimwear for the fashionable, far-from-frumpy crowd.**

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## Why marriage is like basketball

**Newlyweds Marc and Danica (Sotto) Pingris are honeymooning in Boracay. She says, "marriage is, indeed, like basketball. You just gotta keep your eye on the (basketball/wedding) ring!**

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# January exports up 27.3 percent

Merchandise exports rose to $4.17 billion in January from 3.27 billion usd a year before, a rise of 27.3 percent, because of increased shipments of electronics, the Philippine National Statistics Office (NSO) said.

Shipments of electronics, which accounted for 58.5 percent of all exports in January, increased by 14.5 percent to $2.44 billion from $2.13 billion.

The NSO said that apart from electronics, shipments of copper and wood products were the main drivers of export growth. Copper exports jumped 223.26 percent to $124.01 million from $38.36 million and wood products exports rose 183.6 percent to $75.40 million from $26.59 million.

Exports of ignition wiring sets and other wiring sets used in vehicles, aircraft and ships rose 6 percent to $62.03 million and exports of metal components increased 4.4 percent to $34.24 million.

The US was the biggest market for Philippine exports, taking 697.79 million dollars worth or 16.8 percent, Japan was the second biggest, taking $606.84 million worth or 14.6 percent, and China was the third biggest, taking $496.44 million worth or 11.9 percent. ***(Inquirer)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**HEALTH SCREENING**

**OWWA-Overseas Filipino Workers Support Group officers led by Fe Calixterio and Bicol Association's Lito Marquez attend to fellow Filipinos during a free health screening on Sunday.** *See story on Page 3.*

# On the run Satur Ocampo lashes out govt

**MANILA**—Facing arrest for the alleged killings 22 years ago of communist rebels suspected of spying for the military, Satur Ocampo Thursday lashed out at the government for its "underhanded" tactic to marginalize him and other party-list lawmakers in the run-up to the May 14 elections.

By filing the murder case against him, the government, through the Armed Forces of the Philippines, merely wanted to get him arrested, jailed and barred from campaigning for the party-list elections, Ocampo said.

"This is also part of the overall plan to destroy the progressive party-list organizations, led by Bayan Muna," said Ocampo at a briefing with his lawyer Romeo Capulong and fellow Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño at an undisclosed location.

Ocampo, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front

ON THE RUN Page 2

## Trailblazing Filipina lawyer in US retires on Saipan

**By AGNES E. DONATO**
REPORTER

Eleanor Nisperos has certainly seen everything in the legal profession—the good, the bad and the ugly.

But after a trailblazing 35-year career as a lawyer in California, she is retiring with more than fond memories. "We (women lawyers) have come a long way. It's amazing," says Eleanor, who was the presiding administrative law judge in the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board in Sacramento when she retired in January 2007.

TRAILBLAZING Page 2

AGNES DONATO

**After an impressive 35-year legal career in the U.S., Eleanor Nisperos comes to Saipan to be with her lawyer husband Mike Ancheta Nisperos, who joined the Attorney General's Office two months ago.**


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# PINOYNEWS

PDI/BAYAN MUNA PHOTO

**Bayan Muna Rep Satur Ocampo (left) and lawyer Romeo Capulong at a press conference in Quezon City Thursday, a day after a warrant of arrest for murder charges was issued against the solon.**

## Bayan Muna faces 'accusers' at Comelec

**MANILA**—Leftwing party-list group Bayan Muna (People First), which has been accused of murder and whose disqualification from the elections in May has been sought, will face its accusers this Friday.

In their petition, Isabelita Bayudang and Medelyn Felipe have implicated the party-list group in the deaths of their husbands.

Bayan Muna has denied the charge and has filed separate perjury cases against the two whom they called "false witnesses."

Representative Teodoro Casiño is attending the hearing with the party's legal counsel.

### TRAILBLAZING

FROM PAGE 1

She moved to Saipan last month to follow her husband Mike Ancheta Nisperos, who joined the Attorney General's Office two months ago.

Eleanor, possibly the first Filipino woman lawyer in the United States, started her law career in 1971, when she graduated from the University of California Berkeley School of Law and got admitted to practice law in the state courts of California.

"At that time, the law schools were starting to actively recruit women into the law schools.

Previous to that, it was very rare that even a woman of any color went into law school.

It was just strange experience going to law school at the time. Even when we graduated, we were out in the world and most of the lawyers were men," she says.

The year she graduated, U.C. Berkeley's School of Law had the largest number of women in class. Out of 250 graduates, there were 50 women. Before that, women graduates averaged five in a class. That's why she finds it amazing that most law schools now have 50 percent women and 50 percent men.

"Thirty-six years ago, they were touting that statistic as the greatest—20 percent of our class this year are women. Now it's over 50 percent. That's progress!" she says.

Fresh out of school, Eleanor worked two jobs in the State of California from July 1971 to July 1972. She served as legal counsel and hearing officer for the Department of Benefit Payments (now the Department of Social Services). At the same time, she worked as legal counsel for the Office of the Attorney General, where she would rise the ranks to be a senior deputy attorney general by 1990.

She was with the Attorney General's Office when she had her first experience in court. She remembers coming to court armed with her briefs and argument. "I was sitting in court patiently, patiently. Two hours had gone by, and my case had not been called. So I went to the clerk and I said, 'Excuse me, Ma'am, I am so and so, and I am here to argue my case. You haven't called it and the judge is gone'," she says.

The clerk told her, "You know, we just assumed that there was nobody representing the attorney general in this case. We just thought you were here waiting for your father." Then, the judge came back out and heard the case.

"It was that kind of environment that I had got into at the very beginning. They really didn't know what to do with a woman lawyer, and even more amazing, a woman of color. It was fun, getting people to know that you're a competent lawyer and they have to treat you right," Eleanor says.

Three and a half decades later, Eleanor has more than proven her competence. She has also inspired a good number of Filipino-American lawyers, foremost of all, her husband who entered the law profession at her prodding.

"Now in the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California, there are about 350 to 400 members. When we started in 1981, there were 12 of us. Eleanor was the first president.

Things have changed in terms of Filipinos being more and more prominent in the legal profession. It was nice that when the first Filipino-American judge was appointed to the bench in San Francisco, he got up and thanked her for first crashing the ceiling and making it possible for the rest of us. I'm very proud of her," Mike says.

Eleanor had served as limited presiding administrative law judge in the Oakland Office of Appeals from 1993 to 1994, acting PALJ in the San Jose Office of Appeals in 2001, and PALJ of the Oxnard Office of Appeals from 2005 to 2006.

She was a member of the Judicial Council of California from 1990 to 1996. She had taught law at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada and at Salem, Oregon. She has been a member of the Administrative Law Judges Association since 1990 and had served as its president from 1993 to 1994.

Eleanor was born in Manila and lived in Davao City in the Philippines until her family moved to Hawaii in 1955. She obtained her bachelor's degree in English from the University of Hawaii, where she graduated with honors in 1968.

Having just arrived on island weeks ago, Eleanor is currently busy unpacking her bags and settling in her new residence in Tottotville Subdivision. Her plans include traveling around Asia, learning Tagalog, and expanding her kitchen repertoire beyond kare-kare and spareribs with black bean sauce.

### ON THE RUN

FROM PAGE 1

in the unsuccessful peace talks with the government in 1987, said he would never back down in the case, which he said was based on trumped-up charges.

A court in Hilongos, Leyte, on Monday issued arrest warrants against Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison, NDF spokesperson Luis Jalandoni, Ocampo and 50 other suspected communist leaders for multiple murder arising from the discovery of a mass grave of former rebels in Inopacan town in August last year.

#### The charge is non-bailable.

Military investigators claimed that the 67 skeletal remains dug up in Sapang Daku, Barangay Caulisihan in Inopacan, were victims of a CPP "purge" in the 1980s. Only 15 remains were identified by their relatives.

The case was brought to the attention of the court by relatives of the 15 people who were said to have been executed during the "purge."

#### A fugitive to PNP

Ocampo balked at the idea of going underground, saying he would take legal steps to dismiss the case and quash the warrant against him, advising policemen not to waste their time on him.

"They're running roughshod over our rights. That's how vindictive they are against their political opponents," the lawmaker, clad in a light yellow T-shirt, said.

But as far as the Philippine National Police (PNP) is concerned, Ocampo is a fugitive.

The PNP spokesperson, Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, said Thursday the police tried but were unable to serve the warrant of arrest on Ocampo.

"He is acting like a fugitive, that's just the same," Pagdilao told reporters when informed that Ocampo had held a press conference at an undisclosed place.

Pagdilao said the PNP would keep trying to serve the warrant on Ocampo.

"This warrant of arrest is a lawful order from the court that the PNP is mandated to serve as a part of our normal law enforcement function," Pagdilao said. "It has nothing to do with the elections."

If arrested, Ocampo would most likely be jailed in Camp Crame, the PNP's general headquarters, unless the court stipulates another detention center, according to Pagdilao.

#### Surrender

He urged Ocampo to surrender.

Ocampo is giving himself "a few more days" before turning himself in.

"I will surface eventually and voluntarily," he said in a statement.

Capulong said the lawmaker would spend the next few days helping prepare their next legal move to counter the charge.

"If he will surrender right away, we don't know what these people will do to him. So he decided to give himself a few more days," Capulong told the Philippine Daily Inquirer, noting the spate of extrajudicial killings under the Arroyo administration.

Along with the political repression of Bayan Muna, the government is trying to extinguish the principle of the party-list system, Ocampo said.

"They're violating the principle in the Constitution that gives voice to the small people. They want to control the winners in the party-list, and set us aside."

# Over 800 OFWs get free health screening

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A Hardt Eye Clinic staff applies an eye solution on a patient during Sunday's free health screening for OFWs.

By MARCONI CALINDAS
REPORTER

Despite the rains and the gloomy weather last Sunday, over 800 Overseas Filipino Workers showed up and availed themselves of the free health screening at the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Susupe.

The Philippine Consulate General's Philippine Overseas Labor Office and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in the CNMI spearheaded the event.

OWWA welfare officer Leonor Mabagal said she was pleased and overwhelmed with the turnout of the event.

She said she was surprised to see throngs of people starting to come in at 8am.

"I thought the bad weather would affect the attendance for our event," she said.

The health screening started exactly at 8am and ended "on the dot" at 12 noon.

Services rendered during the free health consultation included blood pressure, blood sugar level, and eye check up—courtesy of Hardt Eye Clinic.

"I would like to thank the volunteer medical teams who are always there to lend a helping hand. Next I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the media, print and radio. Without them the information dissemination wouldn't have been realized," she said, adding that the help from the members of the OWWA-Overseas Filipino Workers Support Group was very instrumental as usual for the event's success.

She also thanked Hardt Eye Clinic for the support. Hardt Eye Clinic also was busy during the event, as almost all OFWs didn't leave the event without going for the free eye check up.

Mabagal said the event finished smoothly. She said once again, the organizers assessed the event and are determined to further improve the service this year.

The next health screening is scheduled in June.

## Police group formed to dismantle private armies

**MANILA**—The Philippine National Police has formed a new group aimed at dismantling private armies that politicians might use in the upcoming elections in May, a police official said Thursday.

Task Force Anti-Private Armed Groups (APAGs) will be composed of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), Intelligence Group (IG), and the Special Action Force (SAF), said Police Director Wilfredo Garcia, chief of the Directorate for Operations.

"The Task Force is solely dedicated to dismantle and disband private armed groups," said Garcia.

"And even after the elections, the task force will continue to operate," he said.

CIDG and IG will file charges against private armed groups and their leaders, while the SAF will operate as arresting officers once warrants of arrest have been issued, said Garcia.

As of the latest count by police, there are 93 private armies around the country, most of which are in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, said Garcia.

A region can be classified an election hotspot or area of immediate concern if it has a number of armed groups, said Garcia.

Earlier this year, the PNP formed Task Force HOPE (Honest, Orderly, Peaceful Elections) to contain election-related violence. ***(Inquirer)***

## Palace backs stiffer penalties vs board exam cheats

**MANILA**—Malacañang on Thursday said it would back moves to impose stiffer penalties against cheats in licensure examinations, adding the leakage-tainted June 2006 tests "should serve as a hard lesson for all."

"President Arroyo expects the wheels of justice to start rolling against those who have tainted the integrity of the nursing profession," Presidential Spokesman Ignacio Bunye said.

He said the Palace was ready to work with Congress in crafting laws that will prevent a repeat of the controversial nursing licensure exams, where claims of cheating put into question the eligibility of the 17,000 board passers.

"The controversy brought about by the nursing board exam should serve as a hard lesson for all," Bunye said.

The US Commission of Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) has turned down Manila's appeal to reconsider its decision not to grant VisaScreen applications for the new nurses, prompting President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to order a voluntary retake of contested tests 3 and 5 for those who want to work in the United States.

Bunye also said that Malacañang welcomed the move of the Ombudsman to file corruption charges against those allegedly involved in leaking two parts of the tests.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez had said graft charges would be filed against psychiatric nursing examiner Anesia Dionisio and psychiatric nursing and medical surgery nursing examiner Virginia Madeja.

At least 17 officials of private review centers are facing criminal charges in connection with the leaks. ***(Inquirer)***

## Guam hosts Travel Agent Appreciation reception in Philippines

A delegation from Guam, including GVB Marketing Manager Pilar Laguaña, Marketing Officer II Gina Kono, and the Hafa Adai Show performers led by local entertainers Jesse and Ruby along with a group of cultural dancers, arrived in the Philippines this week to host a Travel Agent Appreciation Reception. The reception was held on Tuesday, March 6 at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Manila.

The reception was held to thank the many travel agents who have supported Guam by promoting the island as a premium destination to travelers from the Philippines. While many travelers come to Guam to visit with family, the efforts of these travel agents is very apparent in the 19 percent increase in arrivals to Guam from the Philippines since 2005. GVB will honor travel agents for their exemplary work in promoting Guam and encourage the agents to continue with their outstanding efforts.

Guam has always enjoyed a special relationship with the Philippines.

In addition to geographical proximity, Filipinos make up 26.3 percent of Guam's total population, the second largest ethnic group on the island following Guam's native Chamorros.

Guam and the Philippines share a strong Spanish influence in their respective cultures and over the years, Guam has adopted many of the traditions and values of its Filipino neighbors.

In addition to showing its appreciation to the agents, the GVB also took advantage of the opportunity to share the island's plans for the coming year, which include the opening of new hotels, facilities, and attractions to further entice visitors from the Philippines. One eagerly awaited newcomer is the Sheraton Laguna Resort, a beautiful five star hotel on the Oka Point in Tamuning, overlooking the spectacular Philippine Sea. The Sheraton Laguna Resort will celebrate its Grand Opening in April 2007.

The opening of new hotels and improvements to existing attractions will give Travel Agents more opportunities to promote Guam to clients and the Guam Visitors Bureau believes recognizing the agents for their previous accomplishments is one small way to show its appreciation for a job well done. ***(PR)***

## LABOR FRONT

### The Federal Ombudsman's Office

By FERDIE P. DE LA TORRE
REPORTER

**Q: Why is the Federal Ombudsman's Office established in the CNMI?**

**A:** The Federal Ombudsman's Office was created by the U.S. Congress in 1998 in response to numerous news stories documenting labor and human rights abuses against alien workers in the CNMI. The office was established "to provide workers with the opportunity to state claims to a federal official who can then assist the worker in the appropriate handling of such claims by a local or federal agency."

The office, which is located at Suite 203 Marina Heights II Building in Puerto Rico, has a staff of professional caseworker/interpreters who speak Tagalog, Mandarin, Taiwanese, Bengali, Hindu, Urdu, and Singhalese.

**Q: What are the duties of the Federal Ombudsman's Office?**

**A:** In his 2006 report, Federal Ombudsman James J. Benedetto explained that the office screens worker complaints to determine whether there may be violations of the Nonresident Workers Act, the Minimum Wage & Hour Act, the Alien Labor Rules & Regulations, or breach of the worker's contract.

Benedetto said the office also screens for violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and other federal laws.

If it appears that the contract has been breached or one of the statutes has been violated, the Ombudsman pointed out, the worker is referred to an appropriate federal or local enforcement agency. He said assistance is provided to the worker in communicating with investigators, hearing officers and other persons who may assist with the complaint.

**Q: Can local government agencies use the services of the Ombudsman's staff of professional interpreters?**

**A:** Yes. Government agencies, including the Department of Labor, Division of Immigration, Attorney General's Office, Public Defender's Office, Superior Court, Department of Public Safety, and the Attorney General's Investigation Unit, all utilize the Ombudsman's staff of interpreters.

Submit questions on labor issues to *Saipan Tribune* via e-mail at editor@saipantribune.com, or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 135. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the Saipan Tribune's office on the second floor of the CIC Centre on Beach Road, Garapan.

# RP expects P45.8B budget deficit in Q1--budget chief

The government expects to incur a budget deficit of P45.8 billion in the first quarter as it frontloads a large portion of its programmed infrastructure projects for this year, Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr said in a statement.

The frontloading aims to take advantage of the favorable weather during the dry months and also takes into account the construction ban in the second quarter, which coincides with the mid-term election period in May, he said.

"This target generally tracks the 2006 fiscal outturn and supports the target of balancing the budget by 2008," said Andaya.

The targeted budget deficit this year is P63 billion against last year's 62.2 billion.

Andaya said the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee has set the following quarterly fiscal targets: a surplus of P14.6 billion in the second quarter, a deficit of 22.7 billion in the third and a deficit of 9 billion in the fourth.

The quarterly revenue goals are P255.8 billion for the first quarter; 302. 2 billion for the second, 279 billion for the third and 281.8 billion for the fourth quarter.

The Q1 revenue target already includes the P25.5-billion sale of the government's 46 percent stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp (PTIC) to Hong Kong-listed conglomerate First Pacific Co Ltd, which paid for the stake through its Philippine unit Metro Pacific Asset Holdings.

PTIC owns 13.8 percent of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Andaya said the DBM will implement a quarterly performance review especially for key departments to ensure the timely and effective delivery of services.

"The results of the performance review will provide the rationale for adjustment, if any, in the expenditure allocation of departments."

The government will also impose spending limits to stay within its budget deficit target, he said.

Quarterly spending targets have been set at P301.6 billion for the first quarter, 287.6 billion for the second, 301.7 billion for the third and 290.8 billion for the fourth quarter, Andaya said.

# US media group denounces arrest of Philippine editor

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists denounced Thursday the arrest of a Philippine editor in a P100-million libel case.

Gemma Bagauaya, editor of the online news magazine Newsbreak, was arrested Wednesday in a libel case filed by Luis Singson, governor of the northern province of Ilocos Sur and a key ally of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Singson also named Newsbreak managing editor Glenda Gloria and editor-in-chief Marites Vitug.

"The authorities in the Philippines are using criminal libel as a battering ram against press freedom," CPJ executive director Joel Simon said in a posting on the organization's web site.

"Government officials should not rush to a prosecutor every time a journalist writes critically about those in power," he said.

"The charges against the Newsbreak editors should be dropped."

Bagauaya was taken by police around midday at Newsbreak's offices in Manila, according to the National Union of Journalists.

On February 12, Newsbreak ran a lengthy article analyzing the changes in political factions surrounding Arroyo.

# More women at work, but gender gaps persist—ILO

As the world marks International Women's Day, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has noted that more and more women had been joining the work force, but continued to be considered less in status, job security, wages, and education.

In the Philippines, Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said these gender gaps were closing. In fact, he said that the World Economic Forum has recognized the Philippines as the only country in Asia which has made an effort to do so.

However, Brion noted that the Philippines still needed to address the problems that confronted the vulnerable women who worked as overseas domestic helpers and who had jobs in the informal sector. The informal sector is comprised of people who work as part-time laundrywomen, ambulant vendors, and small store owners.

"Despite some progress, far too many women are still stuck in the lowest paying jobs, often in the informal economy with insufficient legal protection, little or no social protection, and a high degree of insecurity", said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia in a statement released by the ILO office in Manila.

The ILO said this gender gap was contributing to the "feminization of working poverty," which meant that the face of poverty was usually that of working women.

ILO's "Global Employment Trends for Women Brief -- 2007" said that in 2006, an estimated 1.2 billion of the 2.9 billion workers were women, with the highest number either working or actively looking for work.

It said that more working women were in wage and salaried employment (47.9 percent) compared to 10 years ago (42.9 percent). However, poorer regions are more likely to have more women than men work as unpaid contributing family members or low-income own-account workers, in the so-called informal sector, the ILO report said.

This is slightly good news, the ILO said, as the step from unpaid contributing family worker or low-paid own-account worker to wage and salaried employment was a major step toward freedom and self-determination for many women.

When it comes to unemployment, the situation for women workers is also a bit of a bad news situation. "In 2006, women globally still had a higher likelihood of being unemployed compared with men. The female unemployment rate stood at 6.6 percent, compared to a male rate of 6.1 percent. In addition, women's unemployment rate rose over the 10-year period from 6.3 percent in 1996," the report said.

The ILO thus recommended that women must be given the chance to work by creating decent employment opportunities. Otherwise, it said, the process of feminization of poverty would continue and be passed on to the next generation.

**In the Philippines, gender gaps are closing. The World Economic Forum has recognized the Philippines as the only country in Asia which has made an effort to do so.**

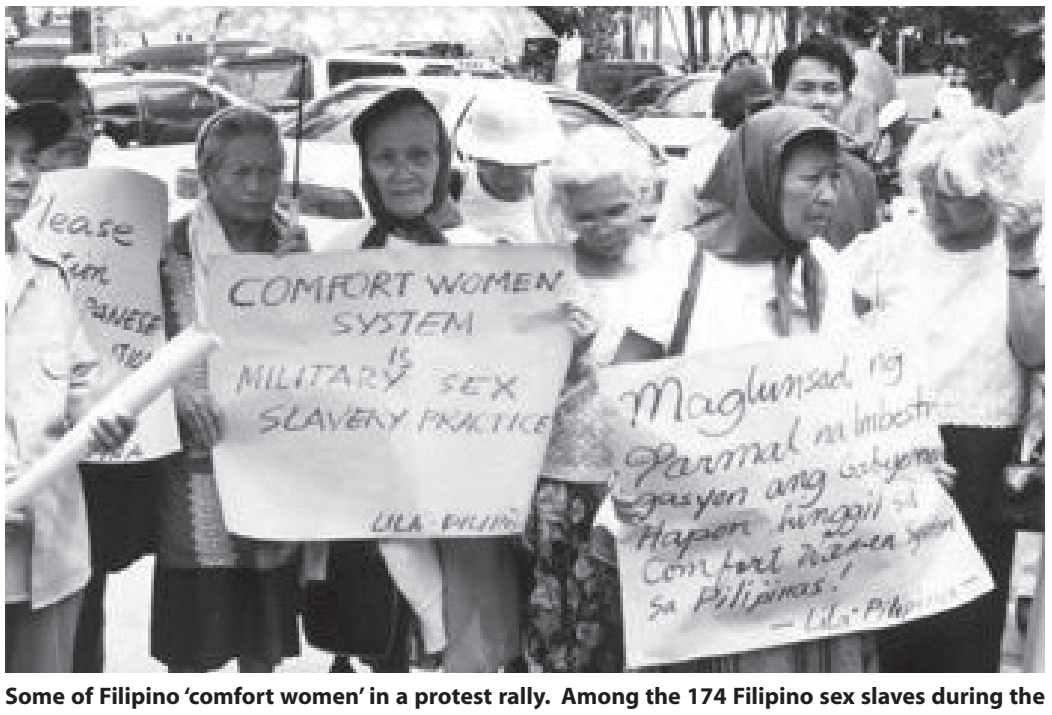
In the last "Global Employment Trends for Women -- 2004," women make up an estimated 60 percent of the world's working poor, or people who work but don't earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the $1 per person, per day line. According to the current ILO study, "there is no reason to believe that this situation has changed considerably."

The report also said wage gaps persisted. Throughout most regions and many occupations, women earn 90 percent or less than what their male co-workers earn for the same job, although globalization may help close the wage gap for some occupations. Even in "typically female" occupations such as nursing and teaching, gender wage equality is lacking, the same report said.

Although young women are more likely to be able to read and write compared to 10 years ago, access to education and education levels are still far from equal in most regions, the report said.

Also, 60 percent of school dropouts are girls who often have to leave school to help in households or to work. Preventing girls from finishing even basic education burdens their chances to determine their own future, the study stressed.

The findings of this year's Global Employment Trends for Women are only partly encouraging. Gender gaps are closing but at slow pace. The report concluded that "creating adequate decent and productive work for women is possible…But policy-makers not only need to place employment at the center of social and economic policies, they also have to recognize that the challenges faced by women in the world of work require intervention tailored to specific needs."




**Some of Filipino 'comfort women' in a protest rally. Among the 174 Filipino sex slaves during the Japanese period, 120 are still alive.**

# Japan to conduct fresh probe into wartime sex slavery

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Thursday that ruling party lawmakers will conduct a fresh investigation into the Japanese military's use of brothels during World War II.

The government is ready to cooperate with the investigation by providing government documents, Abe told a group of reporters.

Last week, Abe triggered outrage across Asia by saying there was no proof the women were coerced into prostitution. On Monday he said Japan will not apologize again for the Japanese military's "comfort stations."

Historians say thousands of women—as many as 200,000 by some accounts and euphemistically known as "comfort women"—worked in the Japanese military brothels throughout Asia in the 1930s and '40s.

Among the 174 Filipino sex slaves, 120 are still alive, according to Lila Pilipina, an organization of wartime sex slaves and women's rights activists in the Philippines.

Documentary evidence uncovered in 1992 showed the Japanese military had a direct role in running the brothels. Victims, witnesses and even former soldiers have said women and girls were kidnapped to serve as prostitutes.

But prominent Japanese scholars and politicians routinely deny direct military involvement or the use of force in rounding up the women, blaming private contractors for any abuses. The government has also questioned the 200,000 women figure.

The US House of Representatives is considering a non-binding resolution demanding a formal acknowledgment and apology from the Japanese government for the brothels.

On Wednesday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki said Abe's remarks were "not meant to change this government's position." He was referring to a breakthrough 1993 apology made by then-chief Cabinet secretary Yohei Kono.

"The government continues to support the Kono statement," Shiozaki said, even as he reiterated earlier comments by Abe that the prime minister would not apologize again even if the US measure passes. ***(AP)***

# PINOYSTYLE

APPLES' PICKINGS

## Mad for maillot!

**By APPLES ABERIN SADHWANI**
INQUIRER

The love affair with the two-piece swimsuit is officially coming to an end. Nowadays, the maillot or one-piece bathing suit is finally sharing centerstage with skimpy bikinis as the choice of swimwear for the fashionable, far-from-frumpy crowd.

You don't have to don a two-piece swimsuit to be considered sexy and hip. Current maillot designs are, in fact, more daring than your average bikini. They're usually cut down to there and slashed to little bits of nothing. But don't panic just yet, as there are also less audacious versions to suit more timid personalities.

The best part about a one-piece is that it's far more forgiving than its two-piece counterpart. It's just too difficult to hide a distressing bulge when wearing a bikini. With a maillot, you can easily play up assets and disguise flaws. A maillot can give much-needed support as well as provide clever shaping.

If you're ready to try out this season's most fashionable swimsuit style, just keep in mind that the right one should always make the most of your proportions. It's all about a careful play of colors, lines, textures and details like shirring or ruching.

It's also important to choose fabric with at least 15 percent Spandex to help minimize flabby areas. Choice of color is another important consideration. So make sure you choose a hue that's flattering to your skin tone and body type.

To help you find the perfect maillot to enhance your body type, here are a few more simple tips to keep in mind:

Enhance a small chest with the use of details like ruching, shirring, ruffles or smocking on top that create the illusion of volume. Slightly padded

tops are also an option, as are printed materials that draw attention away from small breasts.

Minimize a full chest with a high-cut, square-neck or tank-style suit. The suit must offer ample bust support to avoid sagging or drooping breasts. The bottom half of the suit must also be wide enough to achieve balance and proportion. Just a little caveat: Beware of the uni-breast look!

Create a shapely waist and hide bulges by choosing a suit with gathers or shirring on one side or draping that falls across the stomach area. A swimsuit that's cut out at the sides, has a sash or belt or a chevron pattern can also whittle the waistline.

Elongate legs and trim thunder thighs with a suit that's cut high on the hips. Styles with moderately high legs are good options, as they lengthen legs without exposing too much flesh. Boy legs are fashion don'ts because they make legs appear stumpy.

Make hips and butt appear slimmer by using dark color blocks on the bottom half of the swimsuit. For contrast, the suit bodice can be in a brighter color or pattern. A lighter-top, darker-bottom combination will give the illusion of a slimmer waist while drawing attention to the upper body. Full seat coverage for ample lift and control is also a major consideration, while details or hems that end at the hipline must be avoided.

Shorten a long torso with the use of cutouts, sashes, belts or horizontal patterns that cut across the stomach.

Elongate a short torso with the help of vertical

patterns that draw the eye upward. Thin vertical stripes on the sides can also create the illusion of length. For the perfect fit, swimsuits in petite sizes are good options.

## Model behavior

Tyra's disciples have now reached our shores, as the hit reality TV show, "America's Next Top Model," launches a Philippine franchise, thanks to Solar Entertainment.

Philippines' Next Top Model is all set to search for the country's next big fashion icon. Actress/model and former beauty queen Ruffa Gutierrez will head the search by taking ordinary young women and turning them into potentially supermodels who embody the strength and confidence of the modern-day Filipina.

A cast of young, hopeful Filipino women from diverse backgrounds will vie for the coveted modeling contract. Call it a modeling boot camp—the girls will undergo a slew of photo shoots, catwalks and crash courses taught by the country's top fashion industry experts. The show has fielded a top-notch creative team, from up-and-coming designers and creative directors to renowned photographers, makeup artists and stylists.

A great part of the show's success are the fierce and famous judges themselves: "enfant terrible" Robby Carmona, one of the industry's most sought-after fashion directors; and fashion mavens Pauline Suaco-Juan and Vince Uy, respectively the Editor-in-Chief and Creative Director of leading fashion magazine Preview.

In order to maintain its high level of quality entertainment, PNTM instills the concept of beauty that begins with one's self, the acceptance and celebration of our own roots and a heritage that defines our Filipino identity. PNTM values the intrinsic qualities of Filipino women that cross the borders of age, ethnicity and social status, thus showcasing inner beauty at its finest.

Philippines, get ready for something fierce!

Philippines' Next Top Model airs every Wednesday premiers March 13 8:30 p.m. on RPN9.

PDI

**Philippines' Next Top Model is all set to search for the country's next big fashion icon.**

MAKEOVER 911

## Smoothening out the skin for summer exposure

**By KINNY SALAS**
INQUIRER

Those nasty red and white bumps on the arms, shoulders and thighs! Some call them chicken skin while others mistake them for stubborn whiteheads. At any rate, the condition makes skin rough and prevents women from wearing sleeveless blouses and short skirts to survive the summer heat.

The scientific name for the condition is Keratosis Pilaris (KP). It is passed on through genetics and when left alone, will improve with age.

What really happens? The skin's surface renews itself every 28 days where the surface gets exfoliated and new skin emerges. With KP, new skin is created fast—up to three to five times faster than normal.

Dead skin now accumulates underneath with blocked hair follicles clogging the pores, resulting in thick, bumpy skin that has a dry scaly texture. Sometimes the skin itches like crazy.

As we get older and new skin production slows down, the texture actually gets better because there is less dead skin backlog. How ironic that you will probably be in your forties or older to be able to bare your arms and legs with confidence when more revealing attire will no longer be appropriate for your age or heavier-set body.

There are people who have their body scrubbed with coarse grains or towels only to end up with scratched-up areas that have scabbed and even darkened from friction. Clawing them off is not the way to go! That only makes the damage worse.

Some 15 years ago, all dermatologists could do was prescribe steroids that could only be used for a few weeks since continued use might result in the skin getting too thin or suffering from side effects such as darkening and itching. When the steroid was stopped, the condition would just creep back in.

But there's now a product strong enough to yield quick results, but can be used daily for maintenance.

The Glytone Keratosis Pilaris Kit (P4,030) can only be obtained via the dermatologist's clinic. The progress must be monitored by the dermatologist because the solution is potent and there are those with sensitive skin that may react negatively to the treatment.

This two-step regimen starts with the Exfoliating Body Wash with 8.8-percent free glycolic acid, which cleanses and exfoliates rough skin. There is a medium-size bath lily puff included in the kit.

Step two entails applying the Body Lotion which contains 17.5-percent glycolic acid on areas with the unsightly bumps to help clear out the dead skin cells that have stubbornly taken over the territory acting as an obstacle for smooth skin. It smoothes away roughness and minimizes the skin bumps. It may not remove all the bumps, but it will eliminate most of them

Most people find that once-a-day application is enough. It can be applied either morning or night, during a shower (body wash) or after (body lotion).

### Other uses

It cleans out and prevents new blemishes on acne-prone areas of shoulders, chest and back. It also prevents ingrown hair from shaving or waxing on legs, bikini area and underarms.

Do not apply lotion straight after shaving, though; it will sting like crazy. Wait about three days later when hair starts to grow through and the skin is not so raw from being stripped by razor or wax. The lotion will dissolve the dead skin cells that will otherwise settle on skin's surface and choke the skin pores.

Other uses for me: Cleans out and prevents new blemishes on acne-prone areas of shoulders, chest and back. Also prevents ingrown hair from shaving or waxing on legs, bikini area and underarms.

For those who have experienced scarring, pain and itching from ingrown hairs you would know the big deal of this discovery.

Stretch the budget: On days when the weather is cooler and arms or thighs do not have to be exposed, use papaya or goat's milk soap (P30 to P60) as the exfoliant wash, then body lotion with AHA (alpha hydroxyl acid) and BHA (Beta Hydroxy Acid) to clear out dead skin. This cheap treatment will maintain and stretch the great results of the Glytone KP kit. But don't expect dramatic results as this treatment is too mild.

For papaya soap, I use Wellab and Silka Green. For goat's milk soap, I use Wellab or Fibermill. For lotion: Jergens Skin Smoothing with AHA and BHA or Godiva Fruit Acid cream (P224, 20 grams; P458, 65 grams).

Before summer, start using the Glytone KP kit. Glycolic acid is a form of AHA; it is derived from sugarcane. It exfoliates dead skin cells. Goat's milk has lactic acid AHA. Papaya enzymes are also a natural exfoliant.

# Enhancements, not surgeries for Lani Misalucha

Lani Misalucha admits she's had her nose done and her eye bags removed.

"Nothing invasive," she said. "They just injected vitamins [around my eyes]. I also had an injection for my nose. These are just enhancements, not surgeries."

Much earlier, she had a radical dental reconstruction to refine her pout. "That was when we were still living here," the singer said. "The eye bags, the nose, I had them done in the States, and they cost a lot."

Lani left for the US with her family in 2004. They have since settled in Las Vegas, where she performs five days a week at the Flamingo Hotel with the Society of Seven. She's visiting Manila for a month to promote her album, "Lani Misalucha" (Universal Records), and to star in a concert, "Missing You," at the Araneta Coliseum on March 17.

Misalucha, who has two daughters, described her life in Vegas as very "routine."

"I wake up at about 6 a.m. and cook lunch for my family at around 10. I drive to work at around noon. I prepare for my show, which starts at 3 p.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. Then I have autograph signing until 5—longer, if there are more people than usual. Then I go to Chinatown to buy groceries."

DOLLYWOOD

# Why marriage is like basketball

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL

Newlyweds Marc and Danica (Sotto) Pingris are honeymooning in Boracay. "It's surreal. I'm not yet used to signing my name as Pingris," she tells us. "I'm [just] observing his morning rituals. He's an early riser pala! At maya-maya, gutom!" Marc himself is all praises for his wife: "Nica takes care of me even more now. She keeps reminding me not to eat fatty food. We read the Bible together in the morning. Ako parati una nagigising!" Isn't Danica wary of girls who hound cagers? "Proud pa nga ako if may maghabol sa asawa ko. Hanggang tingin lang naman sila. I trust Marc." Marriage is, indeed, like basketball. You just gotta keep your eye on the (basketball/wedding) ring!

## 'Happy Hearts'

At first, Wendell Ramos felt awkward doing his scenes as Rustom Padilla's gay lover in Regal Entertainment's "Happy Hearts" (opens March 14). He says, "I play the 'she' in our relationship. First time ko mag-gay role sa movies. It's more complicated than what I've done on TV."

What did his role teach him about gay couples? "Just like a man and a woman, gays can also be happy as long as they respect each other." Is he open to gay benefactors? "No, thanks. I don't want anybody to spend money on me, kahit girl pa siya. I'd rather do the pampering."

Wendell's got a happy heart because he's a giver and not a taker.

## Spice women

Just like the product they endorse (Maggi Magic Sarap), Kris Aquino and Ai Ai de las Alas are both full of spice. These two women have found the right ingredients for success. What they are still in search of is the perfect recipe for lasting love. Ai jokes, "Si friendship Kris parang si Britney Spears. Di 'ata matanggap ni James ala K-Fed ni Britney na sobrang sikat ang asawa niya (laughs)." Kris' career takes a back seat for now because of her delicate pregnancy. What's this we heard that she hardly eats 'cause she's afraid to gain too much weight after she gives birth? But isn't a yummy food trip the best way to get rid of the "bad trip" that controversies bring? What could Kris be cooking up next?

## 'Siquijor'

Centerstage Productions' "Siquijor: Mystic Island" will take you on an unforgettable journey starting March 14. The crew of a horror show, headed by Ian Veneracion, shoots on location in the island with their host Assunta de Rossi, executive producer Angel Aquino, cameraman Yul Servo, writer Sid Lucero and production assistant Coco Martin. Strange things happen, steadily building up to a hair-raising finale.

Assunta admits she was scared of going to Siquijor because of the spooky tales she had heard about it. "I brought pang-kontra na onyx cuff links, which my brother-in-law lent me." What about a lucky charm so that she and hubby Jules will have a baby soon? "Our physical assets are enough," she quips. "No need for gadgets and anting-anting."

This bellisima Italiana is really armed with charms!

## New show

Before show biz gossip gets stale towards the weekend—"Showbiz Ka" sorts them out to tackle the meatiest truth and rumors as the week starts. It's hosted by bubbly Pat-P Daza Planas, Mondays through Fridays, 8 p.m. on RPN 9.

It's everybody's business when it's show business with Pat-P as the chikapreneur!

## New band

Craeons, a young break-out band, is proving to be a force to be reckoned with. Its single "Grabe" peaked at No. 1 for weeks at Campus Radio 97.1. Check out its debut album, "Non-Toxic" (Sony BMG). The band's music is a fusion of alternative rock, funk, grunge, new metal rock, rock 'n' roll, jazz and blues in one energetic package.

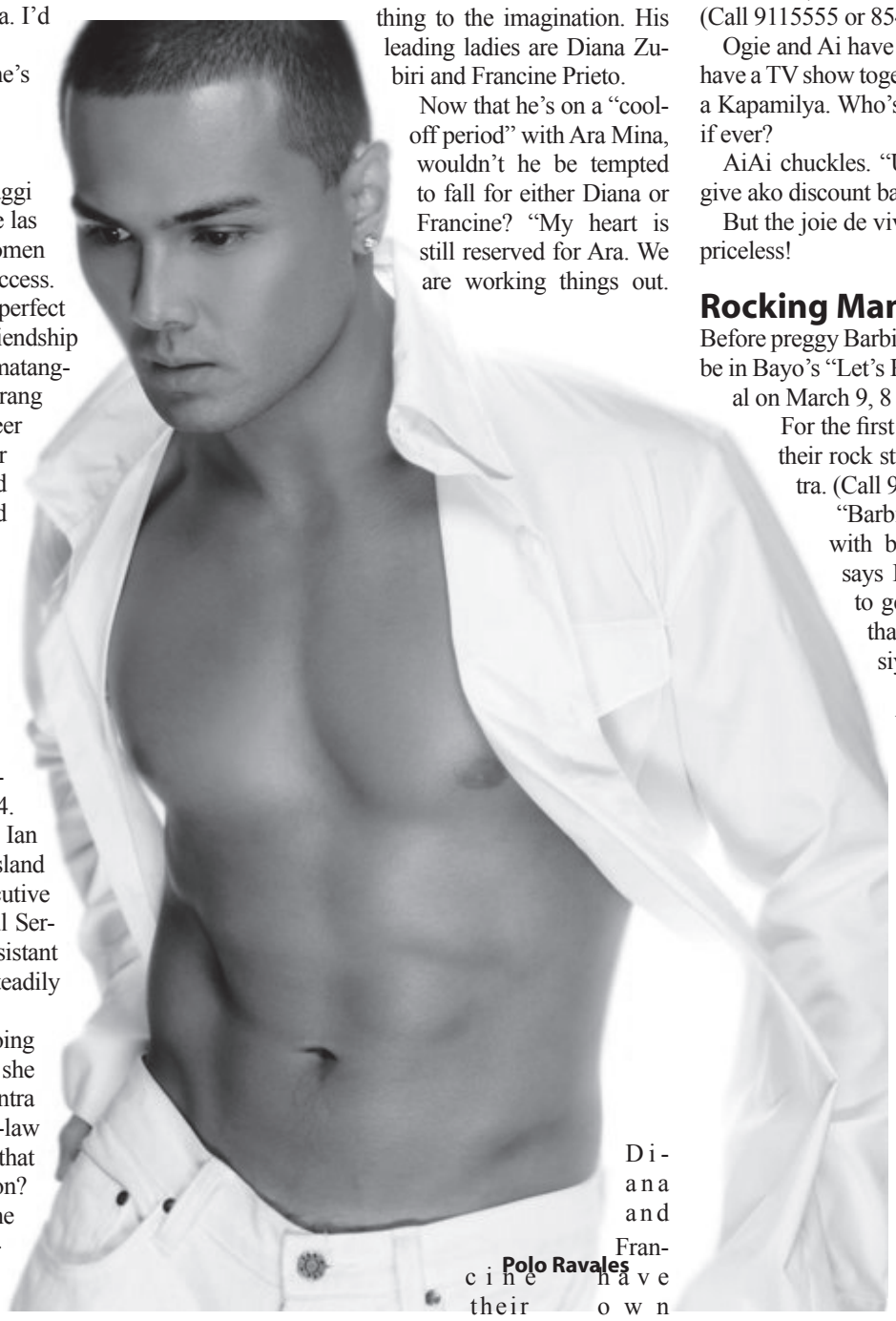
## Polo Ravales

Polo Ravales had no qualms about showing his butt for a scene in Seiko Films' "Silip." He's now sporting a tan for his role in the movie which is kinda like "A Beautiful Mind."

Is frontal nudity next on his agenda? He says, laughing, "No way!"

Yeah! Better to leave something to the imagination. His leading ladies are Diana Zubiri and Francine Prieto.

Now that he's on a "cool-off period" with Ara Mina, wouldn't he be tempted to fall for either Diana or Francine? "My heart is still reserved for Ara. We are working things out.



Polo Ravales

Diana and Francine have their own charms but siguro, if ever lang ha, I'd go for Diana because Francine is too tall for me (laughs)."

Height doesn't matter when our heart makes us try on love for sighs!

Marc and Danica (Sotto) Pingris

## Concert repeat

I immensely enjoyed the V-day show "Love to Laugh" of Ogie Alcasid and AiAi de las Alas. I couldn't stop laughing till the next day!

Regine Velasquez's parents were in the audience. Ai kept ribbing Ogie about the presence of his "in-laws." It was mayhem when Ai mimicked Regine and addressed Ogie as "Honey."

Don't miss their repeat (before they tour Canada and the US) on March 10, 8 p.m. at the Aliw Theater. (Call 9115555 or 8543322 for tickets.)

Ogie and Ai have effortless rapport. They ought to have a TV show together. But he's a Kapuso and she's a Kapamilya. Who's willing to make the big switch, if ever?

AiAi chuckles. "Uhm… if the price is right pero give ako discount basta si Ogie kasama ko!"

But the joie de vivre they spread around so well is priceless!

## Rocking Manila

Before preggy Barbie Almabis rocks the cradle, she'll be in Bayo's "Let's Rock Manila!" with Kitchie Nadal on March 9, 8 p.m. at the Big Dome.

For the first time, Barbie and Kitchie will do their rock stunts backed up by a live orchestra. (Call 9115555 for tickets.)

"Barbie and I are so used to jamming with bands. Di kami nagsasapawan," says Kitchie. And when is she going to get hitched like Barbie? "Even in that aspect, bigayan kami. Nauna na siya. I'm in no hurry."

Love, just like music, is best when savored.

## Welcome break

After the James-Hope hullaballoo, Kris Aquino is taking a break from her hosting chores in "The Buzz" for the sake of her coming baby. Thank God! Viewers also deserve a much-needed break from her dramatiques ad nauseam!!

## Grand walkout

At the birthday bash of Rudy Fernandez, guests walked out when a celebrity arrived. One of them muttered, "Ayaw namin makaharap yan! Super plastic!" She's better off at a Tupperware party!

VIEWFINDER

# Wry, illuminating tale about the vagaries of love

By NESTOR TORRE

The local film event last month was the screening of Eddie Romero's latest film, "Faces of Love." Not only is Romero our only living National Artist for Film and Broadcast Arts, he's also in his 80s, and we think it's inspiring to see a film artist continue to be creatively productive in his senior years.

Best of all, we're excited to discover that Romero has chosen to work with young film artists—co-writer Rica Arevalo, cinematographer Jun Aves, editor Ron Dale, assistant director Paolo Villaluna, etc.

This is noteworthy, because it shows how well cinematic creativity fuses the generations together, and effects an artistic cross-pollination that's beneficial to both younger and senior artists alike.

This is clearly evident in "Faces of Love," because the movie is both wise and dynamic. It's a good film for lovers to watch, because it's Romero's cinematic treaties on the various aspects and vagaries of love.

The film has an inveigling start: Christopher de Leon's character has been receiving letters from a mysterious person and he hires a lawyer (Alfred Vargas) to determine the letter writer's identity.

Vargas' character zeroes in on a woman (Angel Aquino) who used to be involved with De Leon. He is accompanied by De Leon's niece (Juliana Palermo), who is betrothed to a man (Rodel Velayo) she doesn't love.

Vargas meets Aquino at a most inopportune time, right after the death of her husband. Vargas also runs afoul of a cop (Bembol Roco), who dissuades him from pursuing his investigation—to no avail.

As Vargas digs deeper into Aquino's complicated story, he comes face to face with love in its many guises, some of them in conflict with each other.

Thus does Romero develop his theme that love is what the lover makes it: It is different things to different people, and thus shouldn't be "defined" and pinned down.

For instance, even the story's villain, the cop played by Roco, acts out of an impulse of "love," but it turns out to be dark, cruel, even perverse.

On the feistier side, the characters played by Vargas and Palermo initially get on each other's nerves, but expectedly get romantically involved as the film concludes its wryly illuminating tale.

And De Leon and Aquino also come to terms with feelings they've pushed aside for years, but must now acknowledge in maturity.

What about the mysterious letter writer's identity? That, too, is revealed before the film's final fade, and the revelation is instructive. It shows yet another face of love that adds to viewer's now prismatic of the complex feeling that does make the world go around—and sometimes sends it spinning way out of its axis.

# OPINYON

## Librarians

**Looking Back**
**By AMBETH OCAMPO**
INQUIRER

Every time I'm invited to speak on the topic of "How to make history interesting," I wonder whether there is really something basically wrong about history. You have to stop and think twice to differentiate between history and history teaching. I often tell my audience that history is interesting, and if they think otherwise, then they must have had a competent but boring history teacher. When readers tell me how they enjoyed these columns, I realize my history is always unfairly compared with some forgettable school textbooks. Thus, the issue is not the subject, the problem often lies with the way it is taught or communicated.

**Most people assume that historians, teachers and librarians lead boring lives, as there are other jobs which are more taxing to patience and the brain, like operating an elevator in a crowded shopping mall.**

Most people assume that historians, teachers and librarians lead boring lives, as there are other jobs which are more taxing to patience and the brain, like operating an elevator in a crowded shopping mall. Perception and reality are two different things, yet we have examples like that in the opening episode of the latest season of "Pinoy Big Brother" in which the housemates make small talk to get to know one another. When a woman inquired about his job, one of the men replied, "I have a boring job back home -- abroad." Hearing this the girl, without thinking, exclaimed, "Are you a librarian?" To which the man replied, "No, I'm a salesman."

It is unfortunate that people have prejudged certain types of work, like those of librarians, teachers and even historians, as "boring" professions. Worse, there is a stereotype image of an uptight, four-eyed woman like the comic book's "Miss Tapia" who spends her time scolding, or silencing students and library users.

I have known many eminent librarians, including our National Librarian Prudenciana Cruz who is several kilos heavier than Miss Tapia, or the University of the Philippines' librarian Salvacion Arlante who has the same eyeglasses and demeanor but not the hair-do. Then there are the librarians at the Lopez Museum and the Ateneo Rizal Library, both young ones and "young once," who do not fit the stereotype.

Libraries have come a long way since the Middle Ages. We do not have signs that scream "SILENCE" anymore; people are encouraged to converse as long as they do not disturb others. I was surprised while reading St. Augustine's "Confessions" to realize that libraries were not the sterile, quiet places we have today. Augustine related how odd his teacher, St. Ambrose, was because this man read books, silently, with his eyes not with his lips. The practice was for people to read aloud because it was believed that this was the way the so-called "voice of the pages" came to life, how words on a page were incarnated in a reader's vocal chords and how they entered the ears and then traveled two ways to both the head and the heart.

Nobody reads this way anymore, with the exception of monks doing what is called "lectio divina," or holy reading, and adults reading audibly to young children.

Librarians of the past worked primarily with books or printed materials in general. The custodian of manuscripts and public records was an archivist, who preserved artifacts and worked in a museum. But the world has become interdisciplinary and librarians now deal with information in general and these come in many forms, aside from books, magazines, journals and printed works. Libraries now have audio and video recordings, maps, paintings, photographs and other graphic material. They sometimes have museum-quality artifacts, manuscripts and other archival material. And they also have the Internet.

Aside from information services, libraries now provide computer training, basic literacy education, public cultural programs, historical research and other community resources. I think that the only relevant item missing from the present job description of a librarian in a public setting is baby-sitting and poll-watching, which is traditionally left to teachers.

Knowing the present demands on librarians and the fact that they are now regulated by the Professional Regulatory Commission, I was pleased to see over 200 participants in a seminar organized by the National Library on the theme, "Enhance Knowledge and Skills: the Retooled Librarian." With Bohol province as the venue, one could look forward to the post-conference activities, but if I were a librarian, I would argue about the term "retooled," which is better used to describe spare parts for broken cars. Any librarian will benefit from enhanced knowledge and skills, but do they require "re-tooling"? If we translate this into Filipino, retooling is for those best described as having "maluwag na tornilyo," or loose screw, somewhere.

While technology has moved on, coping with it remains one of the challenges to a librarian today. We who live in the 21st century marvel when told that Jose Rizal copied out, by hand, the entire "Sucesos de las islas Filipinas" in the British Library, or how, as a boy growing up in Rosales, Pangasinan, National Artist F. Sionil Jose read at night by an electric post outside his humble home. Technology has made life easier, but has it made people read things longer and deeper than a text message on a phone? A librarian is a gateway to information, and how he or she fulfills the job is a way to social change.

## Gender gender

**Pinoy Kasi**
**By MICHAEL TAN**
INQUIRER

March is marked by a flurry of activities around women's issues, a takeoff from International Women's Day on the 7th. Over the last few years, people have extended the month's focus to "gender awareness" (sometimes said half in jest, "Oh, gender- gender na naman") to mean a focus on women's issues and concerns.

All that is fine, but teaching in many local and international gender courses, I've realized that this focus on gender-as-women can also be a disadvantage, even adversely affecting the effectiveness of programs that seek to address women's issues. Gender awareness must deal with all forms of inequities, regardless of gender.

So, for today's column, I thought we should revisit the term, and identify some of the genders in the Philippines. (Do you want to give a preliminary guess right now? Two? Three? Four? Do I hear five?) Over the next month, I'll do a few more columns, going into more details and why it's so important to set the genders straight (pardon the pun).

### From Sex to gender

Let's get back to the basic terms. When you fill out an application form and see "Sex," you're tempted to answer something like "rarely" or "often" but dutifully fill in "M" or "F" for the two sexes to which about 98 or 99 percent of the population belongs, by virtue of chromosomes and anatomy. (The remainder, and the numbers are quite large in absolute terms, belongs to intersex categories, something I explained in an earlier column.)

Gender is different, with quite complex origins. Derived from the Latin "genus," it meant "kind" or "type" (as in type of object). Filipinos use the term "kasarian," which comes close to this meaning, a category that distinguishes one thing from another; thus "sari-sari" means various, but "kasari-an" means "of one kind."

The term's oldest use, attributed to the Greek philosopher Protagoras, was grammatical. In English, objects are referred to with a neutral "a" or "the" but in many other languages, it's a bit more complicated. Spanish, for example, uses the feminine article "la" and the masculine article "el", so while the body is male ("el cuerpo"), its different parts may be male (like the eye, "el ojo") or female (such as the head, "la cabeza").

Gender can also mean "to produce," which goes back to the Greek "gen" (to produce). This idea of production, even of origins, is reflected in words like "gene," "genesis" and "engender." One translation of Leviticus 19:19 reads: "Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind," meaning in this case "to breed."

In the 1950s, the term mutated once more to mean socially constructed or socially defined categories, roles, statuses and identities. Gender goes beyond the biological to refer to the way societies classify people, with all kinds of expectations from the way we walk, talk and dress, to the careers or occupations we can pursue. We grow up with those expectations and adopt gender identities, conforming with, or rebelling against, society's expectations.

Let's use "lalaki" as an example. As a biological category, it's fairly straightforward, with a certain physical conformation, and appendages (in Filipino, "kung may lawit"). But "lalaki" as a gender category is much more elaborate: you're supposed to speak like Noli de Castro, walk like Joseph Estrada, and if in medical school, become a surgeon. Dare to deviate, a slight flick of the wrist without the wristband, a voice that's slightly too high-pitched, or becoming, heavens (oops, even words like "heavens"), a dermatologist, and eyebrows are raised, questioning your "pagkalalaki."

### How many?

That's gender. I'm exaggerating the stereotypes, but the expectations can be quite severe and strict, pounded into our heads from the day we are born up to the day we are buried.

Over the years, many of us who handled gender seminars and courses would explain that in the Philippines, we have more than two genders, and rattle them off: lalaki, babae, bakla, tibo, silahis. The problem with this list is that people then begin to think that gender refers to sexual orientation, thinking of "bakla" as "male homosexual," "tibo" as "lesbian" and "silahis" as "bisexual," while "lalaki" and "babae" are "heterosexual."

All that wasn't quite correct. Gender goes beyond both biological sex and sexual orientation. In fact, as more social scientists from non-Western societies began to do sexuality research, myself included, we pointed out the inadequacies of many terms coming from the United States and Europe.

"Bakla" isn't a matter of sexual orientation alone. It's used more often to refer to a man who is effeminate. So what happens to a man who walks like Noli de Castro and speaks like Joseph Estrada but "likes" other men? Now that really confuses Filipinos: Is he "lalaki"? Is he "bakla"? Maybe, many will conclude, he is "silahis."

**Gender is different, with quite complex origins. Derived from the Latin "genus," it meant "kind" or "type" (as in type of object). Filipinos use the term "kasarian," which comes close to this meaning, a category that distinguishes one thing from another; thus "sari-sari" means various, but "kasari-an" means "of one kind."**

Then you have men who are really effeminate but don't have the slightest attraction to other men. Are they "lalaki"? Or "bakla"?

I won't give you the answers yet. I just wanted to give examples to show how convoluted genders are, and there are many.

"Madre" is an occupational category, but sometimes, women will joke, "Madre ako ngayon," which means she has moved into a gender category, albeit temporarily, with "madre" meaning a non-sexual person, at least activity-wise.

Then there's "manang." Originally meant as a term of respect, it now refers to older women who tend to be self-righteous and prudish, a takeoff from the middle-aged women who cluster around parish priests, helping to take care of the church but also ending up as a kind of council of elders keeping the priest updated on the town's sinners.

Today, a "manang" can be a younger or older person, single or married, male or female, the gender connotations now extended to include other forms of behavior. If we could confer MS degrees ("Master's in Sulsulan" -- loosely translated, the vicious and persistent whispering that destroys people's reputations), the "manang" would be masters of the masters.

Hey, my feminist friends are probably muttering now, when do we get to the inequity part and gender oppression and persecution? Patience, my friends, patience. We have the whole month to do that. What I hope I cleared today is that gender is more than sexual orientation. Just looking at the "manang," you can see "manang-hood" is an extension of the more negative aspects of local femininity, of putting up a façade of chasteness and of becoming self-appointed guardians of morality. The "manang" is often a woman, but she can be more oppressive to other women than the men are.

In future columns, we'll look at other examples of genders: the metrosexual, the "baklita," the "matandang binata," maybe a bit more on the "manang." Learn to differentiate the "matona" from the "matrona." Learn why being a Spice Boy, as in being "Paminta," isn't necessarily a good thing. And with elections coming around, learn to sniff out the candidates' gender, and how that might affect governance.

# SAMU'T SARI

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**CNMI POWER donates $50 to United Filipino Organization for its upcoming induction of 2007 officers which will be held on March 24 at Aqua Resort Club. Giving the donation is CNMI POWER president and elected UFO 2007 Asst treasurer Ladyvir dela Cruz-Canape and accepting it is UFO 2007 elected President Ramon Awit. Also in photo are some of the officers of both UFO & CNMI POWER.**

LIBERTY DONES

**Prison Fellowship International program services for the Pacific director Graeme Taylor, third left, is welcomed by PFI Saipan officers and volunteers. Also in photo are Cornerstone Church pastor Lito Rey and wife Femie, left, Life in the Son Fellowship Pastor Eric Abragan, fourth right, PFI-Saipan chapter president Rose White, right.**

LIBERTY DONES

**CNMI POWER officers and members pose with Philippine Consulate, POLO, and OWWA officials led by COnGen Wilfrido Maximo as well as Saipan mayor Juan Tudela during a recent induction ceremony.**

LIBERTY DONES

**CNMI POWER officers and members strike a pose during a recent induction of officers on Saipan.**

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

**Jessica Pineda, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer and Teresa Pineda, gets ready to blow the cake during her 2nd birthday party on Saturday at Ubu Restaurant in Garapan.**

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

**Businessman Isagani Benoza, third from right, and friends gather for a group photo during the recent birthday celebration of Benoza's wife, Aida in San Roque.**

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

**Aida Benoza tries karaoke during her recent birthday celebration at the family's residence at Coral Condominium in San Roque.**

Maharlika
PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI • MAILING ADDRESS: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950 • PUBLISHER: John Pangelinan • EDITOR: Jayvee L. Vallejera • ASSISTANT EDITOR: Mark Rabago • NEWS DESK: For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740 • E-MAIL: editor@saipantribune.com. WEBSITE: www.saipantribune.com • CUSTOMER SERVICE: For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740 • SUBSCRIPTION: Published Monday to Sunday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $182. Off-island subscription rate is $376 per year. For additional subscription information, call 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740 • ADVERTISING: For inquiries contact 235-2769. E-MAIL: sales@saipantribune.com